

# On The Same Page? Support for Gender Quotas among Indonesian Lawmakers

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## Abstract

As a strategy to improve women's share in Indonesian parliament, gender quotas were introduced in 2002 and first implemented in the 2004 elections. Despite vast research on the influence of gender quotas in nominating women into parliament, little is known about male and female politicians' acceptance and perception of gender quotas. This paper seeks to explore how distinct are male and female MPs in perceiving gender quotas and in explaining the roots of women's political under-representation. Using a questionnaire involving 104 representatives (54 male and 50 female), the study suggests a significant gender gap occurs not only in perceptions related to quotas' positive-discrimination legitimacy and efficiency but also in explanations that hinder women's electoral success and which strategies might work best in overcoming the disparity. These distinctions matter because they offer insights as to the dynamics explaining why gender quotas are not resulting in a notable increase in women's parliamentary representation.

**Keywords:** women's representation, gender quota, parliament, legislative elections, Indonesia

## 1. Introduction

Following the introduction in Latin America and Africa since the 1990s, gender quotas are now in operation in 130 democracies with the average level of representation for women in countries with quotas standing at 23.5 percent (International IDEA, 2018). Most scholars divide quotas into three basic types: reserved seats, legislative quotas, and party quotas (Bush, 2011; Krook, 2009; Norris, 2004). Reserved seats are a fixed number of seats set aside for women in national legislatures. Legislative quotas require parties to nominate a certain percentage of candidates being women. This can be a small or a large portion but commonly 30 percent—also known as the “critical mass” promoted by the United Nations to be necessary for women to make a significant impact on the political decision-making process (2005). These two modes are legal quotas which can be applied to the local or national level, and often are adopted in developing countries where equal access to political resources is limited for women (Chen, 2010). Lastly, party quotas refer to voluntary quotas that political parties adopt internally to promote female legislatures. This approach is widely used in European countries and recently applied by the People's Action Party (PAP) in Singapore (Tan, 2016).

Gender quotas are applied by a couple of Southeast Asian countries, including Indonesia—the world's third largest democracy. With the fall of Suharto's New Order regime in 1998, a new wave of democracy offers a huge window of opportunity for activists to pursue advocacy in women's rights, including political representation (Eddyono et al., 2016; Soetjipto, 2005). A 30 percent legal candidate quota was introduced in 2002 and implemented for the first time in the 2004 elections. However, after more than a decade, women's share in parliament is unsteady and far from the expected “critical mass” of 30 percent despite parties nominating more women to run (Bessell, 2010; Hillman, 2017a, 2017b; Noor, 2014; Puskapol FISIP UI, 2014; Shair-Rosenfield, 2012). This begs the question about what is missing from the discussion of improving the proportion of women as representatives. This paper aims to unravel the question by exploring lawmakers' perceptions around gender quotas and the roots of women's under-representation in politics. Data collected from the questionnaire indicate there is a gap between the two sexes in perceiving quotas and factors that hinder women from engaging parliamentary politics.

Drawing upon previous research (see Meier, 2008) this article contributes in two ways to the scholarly literature. Firstly, it is the first ever to map the differences between male and female parliamentarians in terms of gender quotas and women’s low political representation. While the adoption of quotas was successfully implemented in three elections, the investigation into the perception of quotas reveals a cleavage between the two sexes. Secondly, this research reaffirms that political parties, as the gatekeepers, play a great role in selecting and nominating women for parliament.

The rest of this paper is structured as follows. The literature review elaborates women’s representation and the provision of gender quotas in Indonesia. Subsequently, the analytical methods are presented, along with the demographic details on participants. The next sections deliberate results of the analysis: legitimacy and efficiency of quotas; explanations of women’s under-representation; and strategies to improve women’s presence in politics. Conclusions and suggestions for further research are presented in the final section.

**2. Women’s Representation and Gender Quota in Indonesia**

As world’s third largest democracy, Indonesia’s experience in improving women’s representation in legislative bodies is imperative (Hillman, 2017a). Women comprise slightly over 50 percent of the Indonesian population, yet their seats in the National People’s Representative Assembly (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat/DPR) is only 17.1 percent (see Table 1). A series of gender mainstreaming policy interventions aiming at increasing women’s share in decision making process was first introduced in 1984 by ratifying CEDAW (Davies, 2005; Siregar, 2005).

Table 1. Percentage of female MPs in Indonesia period 1987-2019. (Source: (KPU, 2014; Wardani, 2013)

| Period    | %    |
|-----------|------|
| 1987-1992 | 13   |
| 1992-1997 | 12.5 |
| 1997-1999 | 10.8 |
| 1999-2004 | 9.6  |
| 2004-2009 | 11.1 |
| 2009-2014 | 18   |
| 2014-2019 | 17.1 |

Many scholars are trying to explain the slow growth of women’s representation with some suggesting political parties—as gatekeepers (Caul, 1999; Norris & Lovenduski, 1995)—are not working hard in nurturing and nominating female cadres (Budiatri, 2012; Fionna, 2013; Soetjipto & Adelina, 2012). The fact that few women run as candidate number one or two, while nearly 80 percent of elected candidates are those listed on these top positions (Formappi, 2014), highlights the issue with how genuine are political parties in promoting women into politics. Another important aspect relates to voters’ insufficient support of female nominees as observed by IFES in 2010. More than half of respondents say they will elect a male rather than a female candidate (Sharma, Serpe, & Suryandari, 2011). Conversely, only 14 percent of respondents offer support for female nominees. The gap between male and female respondents is also striking, where 62 percent of male respondents are in favour of male candidates while 47 percent of female participants prefer male candidates, leaving support for female nominees at 21 percent from female respondents.

Women’s low representation in Indonesia is taking place at all levels of government. The 2014 elections resulted in women’s share in the Regional Representative Council (Dewan Perwakilan Daerah/DPD) sitting at 26.5 percent, 16.14 percent in local provincial parliaments and 14 percent in local municipality/city levels (Agust, Setyawan, & Ramadhan, 2014). It is evident to say women’s electability is smaller in a more local assembly. The issue of parliamentary representation has become a subject of international attention in the 1990s leading to the Beijing Platform for Action being adopted by 189 countries at the UN’s Fourth World Conference for Women in 1995 (Siregar, 2005). Some strategies include adopting gender quotas, which are divided into three basic types; reserved seats, legislative quotas, and party quotas.

The rapid diffusion of gender quotas has been labelled as the “fast track” to equal representation for women (Dahlerup & Freidenvall, 2005), which is also trendy (Dahlerup, 2008) and contagious (Meier, 2004). Tripp and Kang (2008) used cross-national analysis to show quotas are the strongest predictor of the percentage of women in parliament. Data collected by the IPU since 1997 demonstrates whilst there is an increase in numbers of women in national parliaments, the growth has been relatively slow (The Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2017). In

January 1997 the world average for women's share in Single house or lower house was 11.7 percent, and by January 2017 the figure has increased to 23.4 percent. The top performers are Nordic countries (41.7%) followed by the Americas (28.3%) and Europe without Nordic nations (26.4%). Thus, the impact of quotas is not universal (Chen, 2010; Franceschet, Krook, & Piscopo, 2012; Millard, 2014; Verge & Fuente, 2014) and the Indonesian case as discussed below shows gender quotas alone is not a guarantee to improve women's presence in parliamentary politics.

Gender quotas, also known as a positive-discrimination approach, were first introduced in Indonesia with Law No. 31 of 2002 on Political Parties. It encourages parties to have at least 30 percent of party's board being women. Following that, Law No. 12 of 2003 on General Elections was applied for the 2004 Elections. It stipulates women had to fill at least 30 percent of the slots on the candidates' party list. Article 65(1) states "Every political party that participates in an election may propose Member of Parliament candidates at the national, provincial and regency/municipality level or in each electoral district, considering at least 30 percent women's representation".

A further amendment to the Law on Political Parties in 2008 (Law No.2) required parties to appoint women to at least 30 percent of its national managerial positions and a similar share for party's regional boards as a prerequisite to contest in elections. Furthermore, Law No. 8 of 2008 on General Elections stipulated the 30 percent for female candidates is compulsory, although no clear sanctions were mentioned. The zipper requirement (where in each three candidates there should be at least a female nominee) was also introduced in the 2009 Elections and the result has been very significant. A stiffer requirement in the 2014 Elections was brought by the Indonesian Elections Commission (KPU) as its Regulation No. 7/2013 and Law No. 8/2012 on General Elections stated parties must nominate candidates with at least 30 percent being female using the zipper system (one female in each three nominees) or being disqualified to run. These sets of electoral candidate quotas should have a positive effect to women's general electability (Rosen, 2017).

Nonetheless, gender quotas in Indonesia so far have not delivered expected outcomes. Some argue institutional factors like the open-list PR system is the main culprit as the cost of campaigning has soared over the years and this significantly hampers the nomination of women who have limited access to material capital (Anung, 2013; Hillman, 2017b). This paper aims to expand the conversation by investigating male and female MPs' perceptions of legal gender quotas; the legitimacy of this positive discrimination; and its efficiency in improving women's electability. The next section elaborates on the roots of women's low political representation: what actually hinders women in building a political career? Do men share a similar view with women on factors explaining women's under-representation? The following section discusses how men and women think about which solution is appropriate to pursue.

### 3. Data and Methods

This paper draws on nine months of survey administered with help from WikiDPR, an organisation which aims to improve the connection between the public with the parliamentarians in the DPR (Hatherell, 2015). The invitation to this study was distributed by WikiDPR volunteers<sup>1</sup> in March 2017, with an expectation to obtain data from 100 MPs with a balanced distribution between the sexes. In fact, it turns out up to the specified deadline, December 2017, the team managed to gather 104 respondents or equals to 18.57 percent of the DPR population, representing diverse socio-political backgrounds as described further in the following section.

#### 3.1 Participants

The sample in this survey consists of 54 male and 50 female representatives coming from all 10 parties in the parliament. The following table displays the distribution of respondents according to their party affiliation. Members from PDI-P are the dominant group in this study (17.31%), followed by Golkar (15.38%) and PAN (11.54%). Some parties are represented with an equal sex distribution (Gerindra, Nasdem, PDI-P and PPP), while others are either male dominated (Demokrat, Hanura, PKS) or female dominated (Golkar, PKB, PAN).

The range of age in this study is 29 to 79 with the median and the mean standing at 53 and 51.53 years old respectively. It resembles the actual range in DPR, as both the youngest and the eldest MPs participated in this survey. In terms of electoral district coverage, participants in this study represent 63 out of 77 electoral districts nationwide. In other words, the coverage level is 81.82 percent. The sample here also covers all 11 Commissions in the parliament, with most respondents working in Commission 8 (14.4%), followed by Commission 5 (13.46%), and Commission 2 and 10 (each with 12.5%). The scope of Commission 8 includes religious, social

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to the volunteers: Akmal Permatasari, Elva Cindra, Rizky Hanifah, Dita Anggraeni Yusup, Muhammad Jovi Maulana and Faiz Nur Faiqoh.

and women's empowerment affairs, while Commission 5 deals with communications, telecommunications, public works, public housing and rural and disadvantaged areas (DPR-RI, 2018). The scope of Commission 2 covers home affairs, regional autonomy, administrative reforms and elections, while Commission 10 looks after education, youth, sports, and tourism, art and cultural affairs. The distribution of participants on their Commission sittings is unequal as Commission 3, which deals with law and legislations, human rights and security affairs is poorly represented (1.92%). Similarly, Commission 4 (agricultural, plantations, forestry, maritime, fisheries, and food affairs) and Commission 11 (finance, National Development Planning Board, banking and non-bank financial institutions affairs) each only comprise 3.85 percent of the overall sample.

Table 2. The distribution of respondents according to their party affiliation.

| Political Party | Male | Female | Total | %     |
|-----------------|------|--------|-------|-------|
| Demokrat        | 7    | 4      | 11    | 11.58 |
| Gerindra        | 5    | 5      | 10    | 9.61  |
| Golkar          | 7    | 9      | 16    | 15.38 |
| Hanura          | 1    | 0      | 1     | 0.96  |
| Nasdem          | 6    | 6      | 12    | 11.54 |
| PAN             | 6    | 8      | 14    | 13.46 |
| PDI-P           | 9    | 9      | 18    | 17.31 |
| PKB             | 3    | 5      | 8     | 7.69  |
| PKS             | 7    | 1      | 8     | 7.69  |
| PPP             | 3    | 3      | 6     | 5.77  |
| Total           | 54   | 50     | 104   | 100   |

### 3.2 Questionnaire

Once the invitation to participate in this study was accepted by a legislator, volunteers of WikiDPR continued the process by arranging a face-to-face meeting to fill in the questionnaire I had prepared in Bahasa Indonesia. All meetings were audio-recorded with consent from the participants, some of which I analyse and report here under pseudonyms (M1, M2, W1, W2, etc.). The questionnaire itself has both open and closed questions. The open questions are designed to explore respondents' individual perceptions on issues related to the provision of candidate gender quotas, factors that contribute to women's low representation in politics, and strategies to overcome the current situation. The questions were also mapping background information on the respondent including sex, party affiliation, age, and Commission. Meanwhile, the closed-list questions, here formed as a list of statements, are designed to quantify participants' responses. The findings suggest support for gender quotas in Indonesia is not shared at the same level among parliamentarians, and that sex proved to be the major factor shaping the response pattern. Throughout the analysis discussed in the rest of this paper, it is evident that the gender gap occurring is taking place in various aspects. The rest of this paper discusses where and how men and women do exactly differ in their perception of quotas and women's political participation.

### 4. Quotas: Legitimacy and Efficiency

The vast majority of women, 74 percent, disagree with a statement that legislated gender quotas are no longer needed as they will only reinforce the difference between men and women. Women are basically more in favour of keeping the quotas as compared to 63 percent of men. Whereas, interestingly, 22 percent of men support the idea of abolishing this positive-discrimination approach, while only 10 percent of female respondents share the same position. As Table 3 shows, most women and men considered quotas to be strongly legitimate as they fit into the principle of equality and justice as prescribed in the State's Constitution of 1945. Only a small minority of women (2%) and men (11%) express an opposite view on this subject.

The perception of legitimacy is consistent with the response pattern on a statement suggesting quotas are a useful tool in improving the quality of democracy in Indonesia. This statement received women's strongest approval rate compared to any other statements in this topic, with nearly 4 in every 5 female respondents think quotas are good for Indonesian democracy. Men also consider quotas as a means of increasing the state of democracy (63%), yet nearly 20 percent of men consider the approach's impact might not be that significant in creating a stronger democracy in Indonesia.

Table 3. Perception of the legitimacy and efficiency of candidate gender quotas in Indonesian legislative elections (N = 104, M = 54, W = 50)

| Statement  | Disagree |       | Neutral |       | Agree |       |
|--|----------|-------|---------|-------|-------|-------|
|  | M (%)    | W (%) | M (%)   | W (%) | M (%) | W (%) |
| Quotas are no longer needed to be applied because they will only reinforce the difference between men and women                  | 62.96    | 74    | 14.81   | 16    | 22.22 | 10    |
| Quotas have a strong legitimacy in accordance with the principle of equality provided for in the 1945 Constitution               | 11.11    | 2     | 11.11   | 26    | 77.78 | 72    |
| Women candidates are increasingly taken seriously in the elections after quotas are implemented, making women more likely to win | 20.37    | 4     | 33.33   | 30    | 46.29 | 66    |
| Quotas are the tools to improve the quality of Indonesian democracy  | 18.52    | 4     | 18.52   | 20    | 62.96 | 76    |
| Political parties nominate female candidates merely to be eligible to compete in the elections                                   | 53.70    | 34    | 20.37   | 30    | 25.93 | 36    |

The sharpest gender gap occurs in statements related to quotas’ efficiency in determining women’s political nomination success. Most women in this survey think that female candidates are gaining their momentum from the provision of gender quotas, making them more likely to win a seat in DPR (66%). With more women now running for elections, the chance of being elected is bigger. Furthermore, most women also believe that political parties nominate female candidates simply because they need to do it to be eligible to compete in the elections. In short, as many as 36 percent of female respondents think that parties are not genuine in promoting women into politics.

On the other hand, men also think gender quotas are helping women in terms of improving their electability in legislative elections (46%), although one in every five male respondents are not convinced about how quotas do actually affect women’s electoral performance. The majority of men do not share the same view as their female colleagues regarding how genuine political parties are in supporting women’s parliamentary representation. Nearly 54 percent of men think that parties are being genuine in nominating women, and only 26 percent consider it the other way around.

Even though men and women share the same view when it comes to the need for gender quotas and the legitimacy of such intervention, attitudes among male respondents are more divided than women’s. The percentage of men agreeing to end the provision of gender quotas is higher than the share of women who do not share the dominant female view. A similar path is taking place in all discussions of quotas’ legitimacy and efficiency, where more men than women disagree that quotas are in line with the principle of equality. Men also outnumbered women in showing disagreement in regards to the impact of quotas on women’s electoral performance and on improving the level of democracy, and on how parties are not being genuine in nominating female candidates. It is evident to say women are more in favour of quotas because they think quotas are good for the country’s democracy and useful in improving their electability. Meanwhile, men continue to support gender quotas because the intervention is strongly legitimate in line with the concept of equality as stated in the Constitution.

**5. The Under-Representation of Women in Politics: Possible Explanations**

Research participants were also confronted with statements on possible explanations for women’s under-representation in politics (for details, see Table 4). A majority of both sexes share the opinion that few women are actively engaged in politics because they are prioritising families; husband and children over political careers. However, it is important to note the share of women preferring a neutral response is significant and the deviation between the agreeing and the neutral group is only six percent. Some female participants in this study place a distance between themselves and the vast majority of Indonesian women by arguing their children are all grown-ups, making more time available for them to join politics.

Most men (42.6%) and women (52%) in this study also think that female politicians are few due to insufficient political training, social capita, and campaign financial support in securing their political nomination. While most men are convinced of this explanation, 37 percent of them disagree and another 20 percent choose to be neutral. This different perception by men indicates men are more divided than women when it comes to the

external factors relating to three types of capital, social, political and financial, which are required by either male or female politicians to triumph.

Table 4. Possible explanations for women’s under-representation in politics (N = 104, M = 54, W = 50).

| Statement   | Disagree |       | Neutral |       | Agree |       |
|---|----------|-------|---------|-------|-------|-------|
|   | M (%)    | W (%) | M (%)   | W (%) | M (%) | W (%) |
| Women prioritise families, not political careers  | 18.52    | 18    | 24.07   | 38    | 57.41 | 44    |
| Women are poorly trained in the political world and have minimal social capital and financial capital for campaigning | 37.04    | 34    | 20.37   | 14    | 42.59 | 52    |
| Women see the world of politics as a world of men and a masculine, “dirty world” full of corruption                   | 38.89    | 38    | 27.78   | 22    | 33.33 | 40    |
| Women are hampered by various obstacles in culture, religion, and customs that prefer men as leaders                  | 29.63    | 24    | 12.96   | 22    | 57.41 | 54    |
| Political parties find it difficult to get female candidates that have the potential to win in legislative elections  | 16.67    | 20    | 24.07   | 36    | 59.26 | 44    |
| Insufficient role models or examples of female politicians who become inspirations                                    | 40.74    | 44    | 20.37   | 32    | 38.89 | 24    |

On the other hand, men and women think the latter’s low political representation is not caused by the lack of female politician as role models. Despite both groups being dominated by this view, there is also a significant number of men (39%) arguing that women need more exemplary female politicians as party leaders or legislators. As of today, only one party is led by a woman and her position is heavily influenced by the fact that she is the daughter of Indonesia’s first president.

The main distinction in perception between men and women lies in the fact that the latter think women see the world of politics as a men’s world, which is often heavily associated with corruption and full of “dirty intrigues” (40%). Men do not believe this is the case, as the majority in this group (39%) show disagreement. Women also disagree with this explanation at a similar rate as men (38%), leaving the distance between the two opposing groups among women participants at a close gap. This finding suggests men and women are divided internally on this issue as the support for either to agree or to reject the explanation is not exceeding the crossover point of 50 percent.

Another external factor observed here is the influence of culture, religion and customs which often put women at disadvantage compared to men. Both sexes agreed that women’s political nominations are at risk when voters hold strong to a perception that men are better leaders than women. In fact, female respondents gave their biggest agreement rate to this variable (54%), suggesting women’s under-representation is more of a cultural issue where women need to get key approval from their husbands, fathers and other male figures in their closest circle of influence. Men share this position with a slightly higher percentage, indicating a mutual understanding between the two observed groups when it comes to how cultural factors are shaping women’s presence in politics.

According to 59 percent of men, women are simply under-represented due to their insufficient contact with party leaders. This in turn means political parties find it difficult to recruit high quality female candidates who would run for legislative elections. This view is shared by women, yet with a lower percentage (44%) as more women than men believe that parties could easily find women with good qualities and prospects for winning a political race.

**6. Strategies to Improve Women’s Presence in Politics**

In the last section of the questionnaire, respondents were questioned on possible strategies to improve women’s presence in the political domain. While 60 percent of women surveyed consider a more vociferous campaign for voters to choose female candidates is needed, only 37 percent of men share the same view. Nearly 30 percent of men think this strategy is not the solution, as some respondents mentioned the approach might create an unfair impression in terms of treating female and male legislative candidates.

All groups in this study are in favour of increasing women’s political representation by improving the candidates’

selection process (see Table 5). They consider the best strategy would be to make parties more transparent in their methods of inviting and selecting potential female candidates, both from internal and external sources. As Table 4 shows, the vast majority of men (74%) and women (82%) seem convinced the selection process is the key to elect more women into parliament. No women reject this approach, and only less than four percent of men disagree with it, indicating the solution received the strongest support from both sexes.

These findings are in line with the causal factor of women’s low political representation discussed earlier. Men think women are few in politics partly because parties are facing difficulties in nominating female candidates, thus the pipeline in electing women needs to be fixed by making the recruitment process more open and transparent to a wider public. A study by Perludem (2014) suggests to overcome the shortage of female candidates, parties are nominating any women for the sake of the 30 percent quotas and to avoid being disqualified to run. Hence, the quality and the electability of female candidates are highly questionable. These practices also raise concerns around parties’ responsibility to cultivate qualified female cadres until their being nominated as candidates in the elections. One option to overcome this cadre shortage is by making parties obliged to have at least 30 percent party managers being women at all levels; national and regional. However, the 2017 Electoral Law Article 173 clause 2 stipulates the 30 percent gender quotas for party managers only apply for the national level. At the provincial level, an average of 30 percent of party managers being women can only be seen in 25 out of 34 provinces (74.58%). The percentage is even lower for the municipality/city level where 30 percent quotas have only been fulfilled in 333 out of 514 regions (64.87%) (Maharddhika, 2017).

Table 5. Possible solutions to reduce women’s under-representation in politics (N = 104, M = 54, W = 50).

| Statement   | Disagree |       | Neutral |       | Agree |       |
|---|----------|-------|---------|-------|-------|-------|
|   | M (%)    | W (%) | M (%)   | W (%) | M (%) | W (%) |
| More vociferous campaigns for voters to choose more women candidates  | 29.63    | 14    | 33.33   | 26    | 37.04 | 60    |
| The election of women as legislative candidates should be more transparent, through an open recruitment mechanism by political parties      | 3.71     | 0     | 22.22   | 18    | 74.07 | 82    |
| Adding financial support to women’s political organisations   | 37.04    | 4     | 33.33   | 40    | 29.63 | 56    |
| Political parties provide special financial support to female candidates who have the potential to win but are constrained by lack of funds | 35.18    | 6     | 24.07   | 40    | 40.74 | 54    |
| Give women candidates serial number 1 or 2 more often   | 33.33    | 6     | 38.89   | 18    | 27.78 | 76    |

Another strategy which involves political parties is providing special financial support for highly winnable female candidates who yet face funding constraints. While only six percent of women disagree with this strategy, more than one-third of men think this is not a way forward. Men, again, perceived it as discrimination although more men agree this is one possible solution to ending the political participation gender gap. Some women from PKB and Golkar in this study claimed they have received some grants from the party to help them with campaign costs. While the money is not to cover all expenses, this gesture has lent strong support to how political parties do wish female candidates well in their political race. These women mentioned the importance of the survey consultant whose recommendation becomes one of the most crucial considerations for party leaders to donate funds for female candidates who are likely to win. However, a couple of female and male respondents argue money is not everything and there are other ways for parties to show their support. One option is by having party leaders attending mass gatherings where candidates are addressing their audience. The presence of a party leader is believed to be more important than material assistance.

Furthermore, men think the opposite of their female colleagues when it comes to the idea of government offering financial support to women’s political organisations. The latter think this is a promising move (56%), while the former suggest women in general will not benefit from such funds. In general, men are strongly divided by this issue, where those who prefer the neutral and supporting views each comprise one-third of the group population respectively. It is also crucial to note 40 percent of women are neutral towards this idea. This indicates adding money to women’s organisations so as to promote women’s political activism is not widely accepted by MPs in this study.

Women think that list position is very influential in electing females into parliament. The fact that the majority of elected legislatures are those who were at the top of the party’s candidates list (Prihatini, 2018), makes it highly reasonable to push parties to nominate women as candidate number one in more electoral districts. Only six

percent of women do not consider this path as a promising strategy and 18 percent give a neutral response, showing women are keen about this solution. However, men do not share this position since the majority (39%) choose to prefer a neutral stance and more than one-third show disagreement with the solution. Some men argue that under the current open-list PR systems, anyone can get elected at whichever number on the list (M4, M16).

## 7. Conclusions

The current paper has shown that gender quotas in Indonesia are still widely accepted by legislatures, although there is a gender gap of about 11 percent between the two sexes. Women are the biggest supporters of quotas as they think quotas are useful in improving the quality of Indonesian democracy and the implementation is not reinforcing the difference between men and women. Women also believe quotas had helped their electability over the years, although men, conversely, are not as convinced. Men are heavily divided in this regard, as 20 percent of them think quotas have no impact at all on women's chance in winning an elected office. They suggest there are various obstacles in nominating women into parliament and quotas alone cannot solve these issues.

Both men and women are convinced that gender quotas have a strong legitimacy which is rooted deeply in the principle of equality as set forth in the 1945 Constitution. These findings suggest after being adopted more than a decade ago, gender quotas remain the preferable approach to overcoming women's low parliamentary representation, at least in the Indonesian case. However, the efficiency of this affirmative action is affected by several other factors, including political parties, cultural barriers and women's internal preferences.

Men and women differ significantly in their perception of parties' genuine interest in fulfilling quotas. Women consider quotas are only being fulfilled as a prerequisite for a party to run; that parties are not genuine in promoting women into parliament. This can be partly explained by observing how few women are being nominated as candidate number one in the candidates list. This explains why 76 percent of women think parties should put more women as candidate number 1 or 2 to promote an increase in female's share in parliament.

This study also shows the distinction between men and women in explaining the roots of women's under-representation. Men believe the greatest obstacle in increasing women's presence in politics stems from the difficulty of parties to attract qualified women to run for elections. Two factors responsible for this are women prioritising family over a political career and cultural, religious and social constraints that make women less desirable as leaders. Meanwhile, women consider social values and customs that prefer male leaders are hurting women's political nomination the most. Following that is women's lack of political training, insufficient social capital, and insufficient funds to run campaigns. Neither men nor women think the latter need to have more role models who can become their inspiration for pursuing a political career.

This Indonesian case illustrates the importance of observing the dynamics of men and women's perspectives on issues related to gender quotas; the roots of women's under-representation; and strategies to overcome this disparity. It is evident to suggest both sexes agree parties need to be more transparent in their recruitment methods and that where possible they should provide financial assistance for women with substantial opportunity to win.

Future studies might benefit from these findings by expanding the research questions on how gender quotas can be implemented, not only as the rule of the game but also as part of the solution. One of the possible examinations would be whether Indonesia should have quotas that require all parties to have 30 percent of their officials being women at all levels. In this way, quotas would no longer be perceived as a requirement for parties to compete, where parties are sporadically filling the quotas without paying attention to the quality of women being nominated, and the question of how to improve parties' performance in nurturing female cadres would become more relevant.

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**Appendix**

**English translation of the survey forms by author**

1. Name
2. Gender
3. Date of birth
4. Political party
5. Electoral district
6. Commission
7. Structural position in the party
8. Contact (mobile and email)
9. What do you think of the candidate gender quota policies applied in Indonesian legislative elections? Please elaborate.
10. Give your opinion on the following statements regarding the provision of gender quotas in Indonesian legislative elections:

| Statement  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree |
|--|----------|---------|-------|
| Quotas are no longer needed to be applied because it will only reinforce the difference between men and women                        |          |         |       |
| Quotas have a strong legitimacy in accordance with the principle of equality provided for in the 1945 Constitution                   |          |         |       |
| Women candidates are increasingly taken seriously in the elections after the quotas are implemented, making women more likely to win |          |         |       |
| Quotas are the tools to improve the quality of Indonesian democracy  |          |         |       |
| Political parties nominate female candidates merely to be eligible to compete in the elections                                       |          |         |       |

11. Women continue to be under-represented in Indonesian politics. Please elaborate on the possible causes using your personal observations.
12. Give your opinion on the reasons why women have not done much in politics:

| Statement  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree |
|--|----------|---------|-------|
| Women prioritise families, not political careers   |          |         |       |
| Women are poorly trained on the political world and minimal social capital, financial capital for campaigning        |          |         |       |
| Women see the world of politics as a world of men and masculine, "dirty world" full of corruption                    |          |         |       |
| Women are hampered by various obstacles in culture, religion, and customs that prefer men as leaders                 |          |         |       |
| Political parties find it difficult to get female candidates that have the potential to win in legislative elections |          |         |       |
| Insufficient role models or examples of female politicians who become inspiration                                    |          |         |       |

13. What strategies do you think to be effective in increasing women's representation in the House of Representatives/DPR?
14. Give your opinion: would you agree on this strategy to increase the number of women's share in the DPR?

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| Statement  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree |
|--|----------|---------|-------|
| More vociferous campaigns for voters to choose more women candidates   |          |         |       |
| The election of women as legislative candidates should be more transparent, through an open recruitment mechanism by political parties |          |         |       |
| Adding financial support to women's political organisations  |          |         |       |
| Political parties provide special financial support to female candidates who have the potential to win but are constrained by funds    |          |         |       |
| Give women candidates serial number 1 or 2 more often  |          |         |       |

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